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## Approval process report

University College London, Hearing Aid Dispenser, 2023-24

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### Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve programmes at The University College London. This report captures the process we have undertaken to assess the institution and programme against our standards, to ensure those who complete the proposed programme are fit to practice.

We have:

- Reviewed the institution against our institution-level standards and found the relevant standards are met in this area. Reviewed the programme(s) against our programme level standards and found the relevant standards are met in this area. Recommended that all standards are met, and that the programme(s) should be approved

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.

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Previous consideration	The programme is being considered in connection with the education provider's BSc Audiology programme, which is concurrently going through our approval process. The education provider has been running a BSc Audiology programme, which was not approved for several years. These two approval cases seek to rectify this; the HCPC-approved BSc Audiology programme will replace the existing programme. The aptitude test programme being considered by this approval case will support those learners who have completed an unapproved programme and enable them gain eligibility to apply to register with the HCPC
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• whether the programme is approved,</li></ul>
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Subject to the Panel's decision, this programme will be approved and added to the approved programme list on the HCPC website.</li></ul>

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## Section 1: About this assessment

### About us

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

This is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the programme(s) detailed in this report meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the programme(s) approval / ongoing approval.

### Our standards

We approve education providers and programmes that meet our education standards. Individuals who complete approved programmes will meet proficiency standards, which set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

### Our regulatory approach

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of programme clusters and programmes. Through our processes, we:

- enable bespoke, proportionate and effective regulatory engagement with education providers;
- use data and intelligence to enable effective risk-based decision making; and
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards.

Providers and programmes are [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to ongoing monitoring. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

### The approval process

Institutions and programmes must be approved by us before they can run. The approval process is formed of two stages:

- Stage 1 – we take assurance that institution level standards are met by the institution delivering the proposed programme(s)
- Stage 2 – we assess to be assured that programme level standards are met by each proposed programme

Through the approval process, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess whether providers and programmes meet standards based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. Our standards are

split along institution and programme level lines, and we take assurance at the provider level wherever possible.

This report focuses on the assessment of the self-reflective portfolio and evidence.

## **How we make our decisions**

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint [partner visitors](#) to design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. Visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make the decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

## **The assessment panel for this review**

We appointed the following panel members to support this review:

Joanna Lemanska	Lead visitor, Hearing aid dispenser/ Educationalist
Claire Langman	Lead visitor, Hearing aid dispenser/ Educationalist
Alistair Ward-Boughton-Leigh	Education Quality Officer

## **Section 2: Institution-level assessment**

### **The education provider context**

The education provider currently delivers nine HCPC-approved programmes across five professions plus an Independent and Supplementary Prescribing programme. It is a Higher Education provider and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1995.

The education provider has been delivering a BSc Audiology programme, which is not HCPC approved, since 2022. The current learners of the first cohort are due to complete this programme in the June/July 2025. The education provider are aware these learners will not be eligible to enter the HCPC register and must complete an HCPC-approved programme through further study. Alongside this approval case, the education provider has sought and gained approval for a BSc Hearing Aid Dispenser programme to allow these learners to complete this further study and gain the eligibility to register with the HCPC. This new BSc programme will replace the existing non-approved BSc programme and ensure that future learners who

complete the programme do not encounter any issues in obtaining eligibility to register and practice.

The learners who have completed the unapproved BSc programme have completed a programme with a full curriculum, placements, and learning the necessary skills. However, as the result of the programme not being approved by the HCPC, the learners / graduates from this programme will not be able to gain HCPC registration and practice. This programme has been running unapproved for three years and will have its first cohort completing by this summer, who will not be able to register.

The proposed programme is being considered as part of this case to help resolve this situation. The proposed programme is aimed at supporting these learners who have completed the non-approved programme gain the eligibility to register. The implementation of this 'short course' will ensure that these learners have all the necessary skills gained from the unapproved programme to practice. The approval of this short course will allow the learners to gain registration, utilise their qualifications and begin practice.

The proposed programme will assess and confirm the skills and competencies of the learners and ensure that they are able to meet the necessary standards of proficiency.

Both the education provider and the visitors noted that several SETs are not applicable to this proposed programme. This is due to the nature of the proposed programme being a 'short course' and only those who have already successfully completed the BSc Audiology programme being selected for the course.

### Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The education provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in [Appendix 1](#) of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
<b>Pre-registration</b>	Dietitian	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2021
	Hearing Aid Dispenser	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2014
	Orthoptist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2021
	Practitioner psychologist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	1995
	Speech and language therapist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2000 (closing)
<b>Post-registration</b>	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2014
	Prescription Only Medicine – Sale / Supply (Part of OR programme)			2021

## Institution performance data

Data is embedded into how we understand performance and risk. We capture data points in relation to provider performance, from a range of sources. We compare provider data points to benchmarks, and use this information to inform our risk based decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of institutions and programmes.

This data is for existing provision at the institution, and does not include the proposed programme(s).

Data Point	Bench-mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	283	283	2024	<p>The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments.</p> <p>Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted through these processes. The value figure is the benchmark figure, plus the number of learners the provider is proposing through the new provision.</p> <p>This programme is designed to allow existing learners to gain eligibility to register. Therefore, this will not increase the overall learner numbers.</p>
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	2%	2020-21	<p>This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data return, filtered based on HCPC-related subjects. The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data</p>

				<p>point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 1%</p> <p>We did not need to explore this data point through this assessment because this is within the range of standard deviation and the education provider is performing above the benchmark level.</p>
<p>Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study</p>	<p>92%</p>	<p>90%</p>	<p>2021-22</p>	<p>This data was sourced from a data. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered based on HCPC-related subjects. The data point is below the benchmark, suggesting the provider performs below sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 3%</p> <p>We did not need to explore this data point through this assessment because the education provider is still performing near the benchmark level. This is something we shall also explore further with the education provider at their next performance review due in 2025-26.</p>
<p>Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Silver</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p>The definition of a Silver TEF award is: "Provision is of high quality, and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality threshold expected of UK Higher Education." We did not explore this data point through this assessment because the education provider has done well in achieving a silver award. They have maintained this</p>

				silver-level award, having also achieved silver in 2019.
National Student Survey (NSS) positivity score	79.4%	73.0%	2024	This data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects. The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 5% We did not explore this data point through this assessment because we shall be referring this to another process and reviewing this there.
HCPC performance review cycle length		2025-26		The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2025-26 academic year. The recommendation for a 3-year monitoring period is based on referring learner number issues to a focused review process. This duration is deemed sufficient for the provider to continue their development and embed them before a review.

We also considered intelligence from other sources (e.g. prof bodies, sector bodies that provided support) as follows:

- The education provider is located in London. The Executive regularly meets with regulatory and strategic bodies in the region, including NHS England's London branch. They have not made us aware of any specific challenges relating to the field of Hearing Aid Dispensers that would affect the approval of this programme.

### **The route through stage 1**

Institutions which run HCPC-approved provision have previously demonstrated that they meet institution-level standards. When an existing institution proposes a new programme, we undertake an internal review of whether we need to undertake a full

partner-led review against our institution level standards, or whether we can take assurance that the proposed programme(s) aligns with existing provision.

As part of the request to approve the proposed programme(s), the education provider supplied information to show alignment in the following areas.

### Admissions

#### **Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Information for applicants –**
  - The education provider has stated that information is available for applicants via their academic manual on their website. This sets out the learner recruitment and admissions policies with information about recruitment, entrance requirements, and the application process and offers confirmation.
  - They have also explained how they have specific rules for short courses, such as the proposed programmes. These are currently set out in their Short Course Regulatory Framework. They shall also include this information and short course entry requirements on their website's departmental and central short course pages.
  - This approach is in line with their existing programmes, is a regulation set at the institutional level, and applies to all programmes.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
  - The education provider has discussed how their English language requirements are detailed in their academic manual. They stated that formal proof of an applicant's English language proficiency is not usually required. However, applicants whose first language is not English are encouraged to benchmark their proficiency in the English language against the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
  - The education provider has also maintained their right to refuse admission to or terminate the registration of any applicant whose English Language proficiency is deemed unsatisfactory.
  - The education provider has also stated that learners must hold a current (within the last three years) Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. Otherwise, the Ear Institute can arrange for them to undergo a DBS check for an extra fee. A verification of an applicant's fitness to practice by providing a verified health declaration is also required.
  - These rules and policies are all detailed in the education provider academic manual and are in line with their existing approved programmes.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**
  - The education provider has existing policies in place relating to recognition of prior learning, which are set out in their academic manual. They have stated that there are no specific requirements for short courses. Instead, applicants must satisfy any entry requirements for admission that are specified in the course specification documents and indicated on their Short Courses website or the relevant Department web pages.

- The education provider has detailed how applicants to the programme must be registered with either The Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) as a Healthcare Science Practitioner (Audiology or The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) as a Clinical Scientist (Audiology). Alternatively, they must have completed an equivalent programme accredited by the AHCS or HCPC.
- This is in line with how we understand the education provider to operate and aligns with their existing approved programmes.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
  - The education provider's Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies are set out in their existing academic manual and will apply to the proposed programme. These regulations are set at the institutional level and apply to all programmes.
  - The education provider has also discussed how they are committed to ensuring that equality and diversity regulations, in relation to applicants, are implemented and monitored at an organisational and individual level.
  - This is in line with how we understand the education provider to operate and is in line with their existing approved programmes.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** None

#### Management and governance

#### **Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register<sup>1</sup> –**
  - The education provider has discussed how their University governance sets overall expectations for threshold entry routes, acknowledging that many qualifications are recognised or accredited by Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRB). These qualifications must meet both their threshold qualification requirements and the PSRB's requirements, which may include additional learning hours, credits, assessments, and Fitness to Practice procedures. Their short course regulatory framework sets out how this applies to short courses and is available on their website.
  - The education provider has also stated that in addition to meeting its policies, the proposed programme must also meet requirements around admission, registration, additional learning hours, assessment, and fitness to practise specified by PSRB.
  - This is detailed in their academic manual's section on Qualifications and Credit Framework. This is in line with how we understand the education provider to operate.
- **Sustainability of provision –**
  - The education provider has explained how the financial sustainability of short courses (such as the proposed programme) is managed through the Approval of Short Courses regulations. This is outlined in their Academic Manual.
  - They have also detailed how all proposed new non-credit-bearing short courses (i.e. short courses, professional development (CPD) and executive education) must be submitted for approval by the appropriate

Department / Division and Faculty, which includes a Costing and Pricing Tool.

- This aligns with how we understand how the education provider operates.
- **Effective programme delivery –**
  - The education provider has discussed how faculties are responsible for ensuring that their programmes are effectively managed. The person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced.
  - They have an institutional-level recruitment and selection procedure and set overall expectations for the duties and responsibilities of Programme Leaders and Heads of Departments. The Head of the Department is responsible for the organisation and general conduct of the Department. They are expected to participate in teaching, examining and administrative work (including academic planning and finance) and to pursue research.
  - the education provider has detailed how programme leaders are responsible for organising and managing a named programme. They are also responsible for the academic experience of the learners on the programme. The education provider has also stated that all Ear Institute Programme Leaders are fully appointed current members of UCL staff in which teaching responsibilities are clearly articulated.
  - This is in line with how we understand the education provider to operate and is in line with their existing approved programmes.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
  - The education provider has stated how staff management and development policies are in place and set at the institutional level.
  - They explained how regular meetings ensure teaching staff have the necessary information and training and that standards are monitored. This includes an annual teaching and learning meeting that is held off-site, as well as regular operational meetings.
  - , They have discussed how access to university-wide support for staff development and training is ensured by having the relevant resources on the Ear Institute's Human Resources (HR) Intranet pages.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**
  - The education provider has stated that there are no partnerships associated with the proposed Hearing Aid Aptitude Test. They plan to run this entirely internally instead. Due to the nature of the programme, practise-based learning placements are not required, and therefore, partnerships associated with these have not been established.
  - This is something we shall make the visitors aware of and ask them to assess in stage 2 of this case.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** We are referring the education provider position to Partnerships to stage 2 of this case. The proposed program may not require partnerships in order to run and will be a remote learning programme. We are referring this to stage 2 so that the visitors, in this case, can assess this position.

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

**Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Academic quality –**
  - The education provider has stated that they set the institutional-level expectations for short-course programme monitoring and evaluation systems. All short programmes are subject to an Annual Evaluation. Annual Evaluations feed into the annual learner experience review process and action planning undertaken by departments responsible for the programmes.
  - They have also detailed how the proposed programme has an enhanced report system. Here they report to the education providers Ear Institute and Faculty's Board of Examiners, which is governed by their academic manual. The education provider has stated that this will ensure that the proposed programme has appropriate oversight for academic quality, monitoring and evaluation.
  - This is in line with how we understand the education provider to operate and is in line with their existing approved programmes.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –**
  - The education provider has explained how there is a Code of conduct for in place short course learners. This is set at the Institutional level and will apply to the proposed programme.
  - The education provider also has policies in place covering equalities, harassment and bullying, health and safety, security and energy saving information. These existing policies will also apply to the proposed programme.
  - This is in line with how we understand the education provider to operate and is in line with their existing approved programmes.
- **Learner involvement –**
  - The education provider's structure and Students' Union (SU) provide opportunities for learners to engage with their policy and decision-making in all areas of teaching, learning and support.
  - Learner representatives are elected to sit on the required Departmental Committees: The Departmental Teaching Committee and the Staff Student Consultative Committee. The SU manages their learner academic representative scheme.
  - These policies are detailed in the education provider's academic manual and align with how we understand the education provider to operate. The education provider has also detailed how institutional-level expectations are set for short course monitoring and evaluation; all non-credit-bearing short courses are subject to an Annual Evaluation. Annual Evaluations should feed into the annual learner experience review process and action planning undertaken by departments.
  - This is in line with how we understand the education provider to operate and is in line with their existing approved programmes.
- **Service user and carer involvement –**
  - The education provider has stated that they will not involve service users in the proposed programme. This is likely due to the nature of the programme being a short course conducted by remote learning.
  - We shall refer this to stage 2 of the programme so that the visitors can assess and provide feedback on this position.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** The education provider has stated their position not to involve service users in the proposed programme. We are referring this to stage 2 so the visitors can review and assess this position.

## Learners

### **Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Support –**
  - The education provider has discussed how they have effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the well-being of learners. This is set at an institutional level, which applies to all programmes. Details can be found in the Student Support Framework. UCL has an institutional-level process for learner complaints, which applies to all programmes.
  - The education provider has detailed several policies in place that will provide support for learners on this programme. These include their Support to Study Policy, Fitness to Study Procedure, Examinations and Awards procedures, Computing Regulations, Library Regulations as well as the Students' Union UCL Help and Advice centre.
  - This is in line with how we understand the education provider to operate and is in line with their existing approved programmes.
- **Ongoing suitability –**
  - The education provider has explained how a code of conduct is in place for short-course learners and is set at the institutional level. They have stated that this code will also apply to the proposed programme. they set expectations at an institutional level that faculties or departments may publish local fitness to practise policies covering learners professional placements in their programmes.
  - They have also explained that where it is deemed appropriate, any matters relating to the infringement of their rules and regulations, or the misconduct of an associate learner or learners on short courses, will be referred to the education provider's Disciplinary Code and Procedure. The education provider will handle these matters according to their established procedures.
  - This is in line with how we understand the education provider to operate and is in line with their existing approved programmes.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**
  - The education provider has stated that this is not relevant for the proposed programme due to the nature of this being a short course. Being a short remote-learning-based course, the learners will not learn alongside different professions.
  - We shall refer this to stage 2 of this case so that the visitors can review this and consider how it impacts the relevant standards.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
  - The education provider has stated that they monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to all their learners. The policies related to this are all set at the institutional level and apply to all programmes. These policies are in place and detailed on the education provider's website.
  - In addition to this, the Ear Institute also has an Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) lead. They state that learners are also encouraged to join the institute's EDI committee and participate in EDI activities.

- This is in line with how we understand the education provider to operate and is in line with their existing approved programmes.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** The education provider has stated that the learners on this programme will not learn alongside other professional learners. This is due to the programme's nature, which is both a short course and is taught remotely. We shall refer this to stage 2 of this case so that the visitors can review and assess this position.

## Assessment

### **Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Objectivity –**
  - The education provider has discussed how they have institutional-level policies in place to ensure objectivity. These overarching principles of assessment provide a framework and reference point for the continuing development and enhancement of taught assessment practices. These are detailed in the section of their academic manual on the assessment framework for taught programmes.
  - The education provider states that their central administration sets the expectations for equality and transparency in the assessment processes. The Ear Institute adheres to these policies, which are communicated to all stages involved in assessment and monitored by the departmental teaching committee, exam boards, and external examiners.
  - These policies are set at the institutional level and follow how we understand the education provider to operate.
- **Progression and achievement –**
  - The institutional policies apply to all programmes and set expectations that qualifications must meet institutional threshold requirements and any Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements. The education provider's Assessment Framework and Qualifications and Credit Framework specifies the requirements for progression and achievement within their programmes.
  - The education provider has described how they have plans to ensure that these standards are applied to the proposed programme. This includes the programme being delivered by core UCL teaching staff and will be governed by the UCL Short Course Framework with enhanced reporting into the Ear Institute and Faculty of Brain Sciences Exam Boards.
  - The details in the education provider academic manual follow how we understand how the education provider operates.
- **Appeals –**
  - The education provider has discussed how they have processes for learners to make academic appeals. These policies are set at the institutional level and shall apply to the proposed programme.
  - They have also discussed how a complaint cannot be resolved informally, UCL has an established learner complaints procedure for dealing with both academic and non-academic complaints and representations from learners.
  - These are detailed in the education provider academic manual and follow how we understand the education provider to operate.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** None

### **Outcomes from stage 1**

Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities:

- Two members of staff will be involved in the delivery and management of the programme. One member of our administrative team will support the programme. One member of staff will be course director.
- No physical resources are required for teaching as this will all take place online. An online teaching site has already been set up. We have the required space for an in person assessment at the end of the programme.

We decided to progress to stage 2 of the process without further review through stage 1, due to the clear alignment of the new provision within existing institutional structures, as noted through the previous section.

There are several areas that we are highlighting for the visitors to assess in stage 2 that were raised in stage 1. These are detailed in the previous section. This shall be referred to the visitors through our context setting document.

### **Section 3: Programme-level assessment**

#### **Programmes considered through this assessment**

Programme name	Mode of study	Profession (including modality) / entitlement	Proposed learner number, and frequency	Proposed start date
Hearing aid aptitude test	FLX	Hearing Aid Dispenser	20 learners, 1 cohort per year	22/09/2025

#### **Stage 2 assessment – provider submission**

The education provider was asked to demonstrate how they meet programme level standards for each programme. They supplied information about how each standard was met, including a rationale and links to supporting information via a mapping document.

#### **Performance data**

We also considered intelligence from other sources (e.g. professional bodies, and sector bodies that provided support) as follows:

- The education provider is located in London. The executive regularly meets with bodies in the region, including NHS England's London branch. They have

not made us aware of any specific challenges relating to the field of Hearing Aid Dispensers that would affect the approval of this programme.

### **Quality themes identified for further exploration**

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their submission. Based on our understanding, we requested further information via short points of clarification. These are defined and detailed in section four of this report.

## **Section 4: Findings**

This section details the visitors' findings from their review through stage 2, including any requirements set, and a summary of their overall findings.

### **Overall findings on how standards are met**

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings against the programme-level standards. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

#### **Findings of the assessment panel:**

- **SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register** – this standard is covered through institution-level assessment
- **SET 2: Programme admissions** –
  - The education provider has explained how this programme has been designed to support those learners who have previously studied their non-HCPC BSc Audiology programme. Current learners on this programme will not be eligible to register with the HCPC. The proposed programme, if approved by the Education Training Panel, will make them eligible to apply to the HCPC register upon completion.
  - The programme will only be accepting learners who have graduated from the unapproved UCL BSc Audiology programme since 2025. This is because the education provider has been running the unapproved BSc programme for this profession since 2022. The learners who have completed this BSc programme are currently unable to gain HCPC registration and begin practice. This proposed programme is designed to ensure that these learners gain the eligibility to register with the HCPC, utilise the skills they have gained on the BSc programme and begin practice
  - The visitors found the education providers' entry criteria and information to be clearly laid out. They noted that the programme information clearly stipulates that the programme is open exclusively to graduates of the UCL BSc Audiology programme who have completed their studies within the last 15 months. They agreed the education provider had implemented this to align academic standards with the programme's objectives.
  - The visitors agreed the standards related to this area to be met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
  - The education provider has detailed how there are 10 members of staff with a professional audiology qualification at the Ear Institute. These

staff will contribute to the running and teaching of this programme. They have also detailed how clinical teaching staff are qualified to at least MSc level. They all have undertaken training in teaching in higher education, and two members of staff are HCPC-registered Hearing Aid Dispensers.

- The education provider also detailed how they will use the UCL Extend system to deliver the programme. This is a public-facing learning platform for short courses and professional education. It contains written and video learn content useful for the learners on the programme.
- The visitors noted the information available that will support the introduction of the programme. This includes the resources available for the programme, the visitors found there to be a comprehensive suite of resources available to support the introduction of this programme. They also noted how the programme will be delivered online and noted that the programme structure will be appropriate. They also found the programme summary further details the various learning resources available, such as interactive content, access to a virtual learning environment, and online drop-in sessions, ensuring that the learning experience is both engaging and accessible.
- Additionally, the visitors found the levels of staffing available for the programme to be appropriate. This includes 10 members of staff with professional audiology qualifications, and all clinical teaching staff holding at least an MSc qualification along with higher education teaching training qualifications. They found these to be appropriate for the proposed programme.
- The visitors therefore found the standards related to this area to be met.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery –**
  - The education provider has detailed how the programme's content has been designed to ensure that learners will graduate with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet (or exceed) the requirements of HCPC. They also explained how the first subject area covered in the programme will cover the expectations of professional behaviour with strong emphasis on the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
  - They have stated that the programme will also be delivered in accordance with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) quality code. They also demonstrated how the focus of the programme is to meet the needs of qualified audiology practitioners aiming to register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) as Hearing Aid Dispensers.
  - The education provider has also explained how their HCPC registered staff will continue to maintain their registration throughout the duration of the programme. They will continue to attend relevant training and conferences as part of their professional development. Therefore, they will be aware of any changes in research or current clinical practice that need to be implemented into the short course curriculum.
  - Through clarification, the education provider confirmed that they will be delivering the programme in accordance to the latest QAA quality code (2024).

- The visitors found the curriculum to be structured to ensure that learners acquire not only the technical skills necessary for practice but also a deep understanding of professional behaviour and ethics. They noted the mechanisms in place to ensure the programme is kept up to date and to effectively integrate theoretical knowledge with practical application.
- The visitors also noted that due to the nature of this proposed programme, learners on this programme will not learn alongside other professional learners. This is due to the programme's nature, which is both a short course and is taught remotely. We recognise that applicants to this programme have also already completed a BSc Audiology programme and will have learnt alongside other learners on this programme
- The visitors therefore found the standards related to this area to be met.
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning –**
  - The education provider has explained that due to the nature of the proposed programme being a short course, there are no elements of practice-based learning. The SETs relating to this area are not applicable to the proposed programme.
  - The visitors noted how the programme is specifically designed as a short course for audiologists who already have clinical qualifications and thus does not incorporate a dedicated practice-based learning component.
  - They noted how the programme information clearly indicates that the course is focused on preparing graduates for HCPC registration through theoretical and assessment-based methods rather than through additional clinical practice experiences.
  - The visitors therefore found the standards related to this area to be met.
- **SET 6: Assessment –**
  - The education provider has detailed how it will be a one-in-person multiple-choice exam which will test knowledge across the six topic areas. The pass mark is 70%. Any learner who fails the exam will have a second chance to take the assessment. Furthermore, the expectations of professional behaviour, including standards of conduct, performance and ethics, will also be examined in this assessment.
  - The education provider has also stated that the proposed assessments are aligned with the learning outcomes for each topic. Any new assessments will be reviewed and commented on by their external examiner for their existing MSc Audiological Science with Clinical Practice programme.
  - Through clarification, the education provider explained how there will be an online formative multiple-choice quiz for each topic, which will be similar in style to the final summative assessment. Learners will be able to view feedback on their response to each question, and this system will be used to monitor learners' progression on the programme.
  - Additionally, personal tutors assigned to each learner will monitor engagement and progress throughout the programme by viewing online participation log reports and formative quiz scores.

- The visitors found the proposed programme assessment methods to be appropriate and proportionate. They found the programme's assessment strategy to be designed to evaluate not only technical knowledge but also the professional behaviours expected of HCPC registrants. Furthermore, they noted how the programme employs assessment methods that align with and measure the intended learning outcomes effectively. The programme summary outlines that the primary assessment is an in-person multiple-choice examination, which evaluates theoretical knowledge across the key topics of the curriculum.
- The visitors therefore found the standards related to this area to be met.

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** None

## Section 5: Referrals

This section summarises any areas which require further follow-up through a separate quality assurance process

There were no outstanding issues to be referred to another process.

## Section 6: Decision on approval process outcomes

### **Assessment panel recommendation**

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:

- All standards are met, and therefore the programmes should be approved.

### **Education and Training Committee decision**

Education and Training Committee considered the assessment panel's recommendations and the findings which support these. The education provider was also provided with the opportunity to submit any observation they had on the conclusions reached.

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that:

- The programme is approved.

**Reason for this decision:** The Panel accepted the visitor's recommendation that the programme should receive approval.

## Appendix 1 – summary report

Education provider	Case reference	Lead visitors	Quality of provision	Facilities provided
University College London	CAS-01716-C6V0K8	Claire Langman  Joanna Lemanska	Through this assessment, we have noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.</li> </ul>	Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two members of staff will be involved in the delivery and management of the programme. One member of our administrative team will support the programme. One member of staff will be course director.</li> <li>No physical resources are required for teaching as this will all take place online. An online teaching site has already been set up. We have the required space for an in person assessment at the end of the programme.</li> </ul>
Programmes				
Programme name			Mode of study	Nature of provision
Hearing aid aptitude test			DL (Distance learning)	Taught (HEI)

## Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

<b>Name</b>	<b>Mode of study</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Modality</b>	<b>Annotation</b>	<b>First intake date</b>
D.Ed.Psy Educational and Child Psychology	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist		Educational psychologist	01/01/2005
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DclinPsych)	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist		Clinical psychologist	01/01/1995
Doctorate in Professional Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology (DEdPsy)	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist		Educational psychologist	01/09/2011
MSc Audiological Science with Clinical Practice	FT (Full time) / PT (Part time)	Hearing aid dispenser			01/09/2014
MSc in Dietetics (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Dietitian			01/10/2021
MSc Orthoptics (pre-registration)	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Orthoptist		POM - Sale / Supply (OR)	01/09/2021
MSc Speech and Language Sciences	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist			01/09/2000

PCGert in Independent and Supplementary Non Medical Prescribing with Enhanced Clinical Assessment	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	23/09/2024
Postgraduate Diploma Audiological Science with Clinical Practice	FT (Full time)	Hearing aid dispenser			01/09/2014